

Justice and Mercy recommended, particularly with reference to the SLAVE TRADE.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

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C A M B R I D G E,

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B E I L B Y,

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

WITHOUT permission asked, my Lord, and even without your knowledge to take this liberty, may perhaps be thought a great degree of presumption. Possibly it may really be so. Yet to whom can I with so much propriety inscribe the following humble recommendation of Justice and Mercy, as to him who hath nobly distinguished himself in the same cause, and stood forth publicly the Patron of Benevolence and Humanity.

I look back, my Lord, with secret pleasure on past times, and with great satisfaction of mind recollect those happy hours of private intercourse which I have enjoyed with you in my sequestered situation. And I well remember that the subject which I have weakly touched in the ensuing discourse, was not unfrequently a Topic of our conversation. Our sentiments then agreed : I am happy to find they do so still, and wish from my soul that not only your Lordship, but that all the world agreed with me in receiving with horror the very idea of Slavery and Inhumanity.

I live in great measure out of the world, and hear on but very slight authority what is going forward in it. There seems to be reason to hope that a most respectable association is now forming to effect, if possible,

ble, the Abolition of the Slave Trade, that abominable violation of the Laws of God, and the common Rights of Man.

No difficulty of any consequence can attend the carrying it into execution, nor can any personal injury be pretended, if the TOTAL abolition be determined with respect to FUTURE time, and a proper mode of gradual emancipation established with respect to those poor creatures who at present suffer this enormous injustice. I have seen a practicable scheme drawn up by a very worthy member of your reverend bench, which would be effectual to this purpose, and to which in my opinion there is not a rational objection. The Spaniards have in some of their settlements, as I am informed, carried a similar plan into execution, and find great benefit resulting from it. A

very respectable Sect of our dissenting brethren (on many accounts very respectable indeed, particularly in their reverence for the majesty and the name of God, in their disapprobation of war, and their fixed abhorrence of every species of inhumanity) have in respect of the Slave Trade set us a very amiable example: May we have the virtue to follow it!

As to our movements at home upon this subject, I hear mentioned the honoured names of WILBERFORCE and SHARP, as Leaders in this glorious undertaking. Their known and established virtues must surely induce many to join in this great work of Justice and Mercy: and may Heaven prosper and reward their Labours!

Your great city, my Lord, the first in eminence, stands the foremost in this truly Christian Charity. The towns of Manchester and Birmingham,

ham, places of great importance, have already joined in following the good example, and giving their support. Other places are named, and it is to be hoped there will not be many either places or persons in whom the mercenary gripe of self-interest will totally eradicate the generous emotions of Philanthropy.

We from this University shew, by our Address to the Legislature, and by the Contribution of our Mite, that the precepts of moral instruction have not been thrown away upon us; and no doubt our more opulent Academical Sister will bestow her richer offerings, in order to bring forward with full effect the application to the Legislature for the TOTAL ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

With respect to myself, my sphere of action is very contracted indeed: and I now step forth, a volunteer,

with humility yet with resolution to offer rather my inclination than ability to serve. My efforts, probably, can reach little farther than to infuse into the minds of the young men committed to my care, principles of reverence for our unrivaled Constitution, of Loyalty to the King, the Patron and Example of Justice and Mercy ; of Obedience to Magistrates, and of Universal Benevolence: and thus on the solid foundation of true Virtue eventually serve the good Cause, to which I most devoutly wish all possible success.

When I was first called to this place, I had conceived some thoughts to attempt something upon this subject, which was always near my heart ; but being diffident of my own strength, and recollecting the fate of the poor man (James ii. 2.) when One with a gold ring and goodly apparel came into the

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the assembly, I desisted from my intentions. For those great personages are too apt, if the Poor man speak, to say, What fellow is this? and if he stumble they will help to overthrow him. (Ecclus. xiii. 23.)

When I had the honour, about three years since, to serve the principal office in this University, I gave the Indefensibleness of Slavery as a subject for the Public Exercises of the Batchelors; and Mr. Clarksons performance which gained the Prize, has been laid before the world in more than one edition. Thus, through him, I look upon myself as in some small degree a Promoter of the glorious attempt to set the Slave at Liberty.

A century of years hath now passed since Providence bestowed upon us, on the sure ground of Constitutional Establishment, the inestimable blessings of Liberty Civil and Religious.

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Let this year then be a Jubilee of Commemoration: not in noisy riot and drunkenness, not in disorder and tumult, but by extending the blessings we enjoy to those who are deprived of them; by breaking every yoke, and setting the poor Captive free.

My motive, my Lord, for taking this liberty with you, must be also my apology—an impulse of Conscience to contribute my feeble endeavours, but principally an earnest desire to incite some more able advocate—

—fungar vice cōtis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipse secandi.

From every candid reader also I must solicit his indulgence for the many inaccuracies—

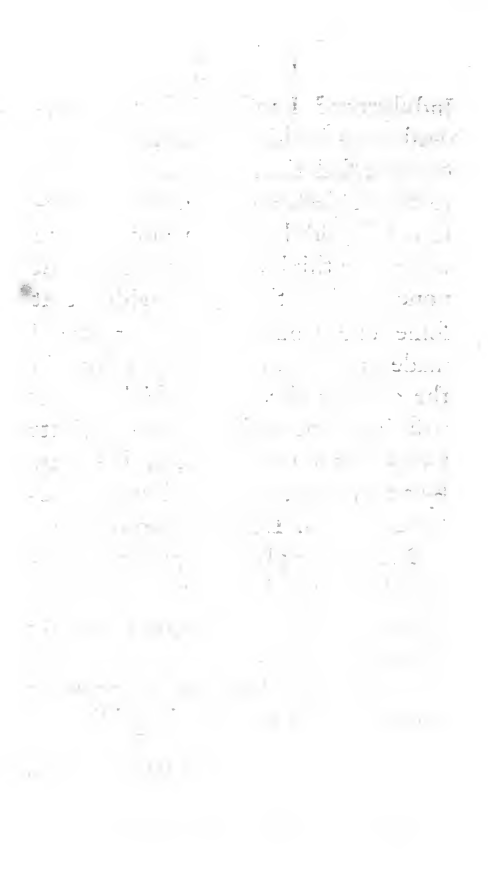
——quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parum cavit natura—

But why then trouble the Public with Inaccuracies that require this
indul-

Indulgence? I answer, There are indeed many in this place infinitely better qualified than I am to do Justice to the Subject, and with sincere pleasure I should have seen any of them undertake this benevolent office. But none stood forth: it was wished that some one would; and therefore I made an offer of my weak efforts in the ensuing discourse; which was at first intended only for the private Chapel of a small Society, but now by an unexpected fate is humbly presented to your Lordship's protection.

May you, my Lord, experience every earthly blessing! may you long enjoy in health and happiness your honourable and exalted Station! and may your pious labours here be hereafter rewarded with never-ending felicity!

P. PECKARD.



S E R M O N, &c.

M I C A H vi. 8.

HE HATH SHEWED THEE, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD, AND WHAT DOTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE BUT TO DO JUSTLY, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD.

THAT God is both able and willing to direct man to his proper happiness, is evidently deducible from his acknowledged attributes of unlimited Power and Goodness.

He who created us, and gave us all our faculties, is undoubtedly able to influence and direct those faculties in what manner and to what degree he himself shall judge proper.

He whose mercy is over all his works, who knows whereof we are made, and that
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without his assisting hand we should be lost in ignorance and misery, undoubtedly will not withhold that assistance which is proper for our situation.

The known state of the world in the different periods and different circumstances of it's Existence, plainly prove that where the knowledge of a superintending Providence is by any means lost, there ignorance, and misery prevail, and every bad passion that can disgrace a rational being is predominant. On the contrary, where the sense of an overruling Providence hath been kept alive, and the duties naturally resulting from it properly attended to, there we find the seat of virtue and of happiness.

These are known truths that bring peace and comfort with them: and on this ground we may make the following equitable conclusion, That wheresoever men will keep God in their thoughts, and duly attend to the notices he is pleased to bestow, he does at all times, and in all places shew them what is for their Good.

In what way it may please the Almighty to communicate to us these notices conducive to our happiness, perhaps, in our present state, it may be impossible for us fully
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to conceive, and certainly would be a blameable curiosity to enquire. We ought to be thankful for the blessing, and not be over sollicitous to know the precise means by which we receive it. Yet in general we may say, I hope without presumption,

First, That God hath shewn us what is Good by the frame and constitution of our nature, originally disposed by him to receive in due time distinct impressions of Good and Evil, of Right and Wrong, with a Natural Tendency to be pleased with the one, and to feel an abhorrence of the other.

Secondly, That he hath at sundry times, and in diverse manners, strengthened and assisted these original tendencies of our Nature by various communications of his revealed Will.

First then, if I may be allowed to speak, and to judge of a Moral Sense of Good and Evil by analogy from the other senses with which God hath blessed us, it is plain beyond all doubt, that there are some objects that are naturally agreeable, others that are naturally disagreeable. All colours are not equally pleasant to the eye, all sounds to the ear, all scents to the faculty of smelling, nor all tastes to the palate. Some are originally

ginally offensive in a high degree, while others are in an equal degree delightful. And although these may, from subsequent causes, be greatly changed, insomuch that those things which were originally pleasant or disgusting, shall at length have a contrary effect; yet this is not the work of Nature, but of Education, or other subsequent and secondary causes. By degrees we are taught to dislike what was once agreeable, and to receive with pleasure what was originally offensive.

So may it be with respect to what I mean by a Moral sense of Good and Evil. I have not the least doubt, but that when the human constitution is so far advanced that Reason begins to act, and judgments can be formed, and distinct notions framed of Right and Wrong, the approbation of Good, and the dislike of Evil, will arise from the Original Constitution of human nature.

I hope I shall not be so misunderstood as to be thought to advance the doctrine of Innate Ideas, or Innate Instincts. I mean no such thing. I suppose only, that as soon as the Faculty of Perception exists, there will be a difference of Perceptions. That with respect to Sensation from external

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nial objects, if a child at it's birth be severely smitten with a rod, or lightly touched with a feather, be exposed to extremity of piercing cold, or fostered by a genial warmth, the perceptions will be very different, and one will be attended with pleasure, the other with pain.

In a manner something analogous to this, when the mental perceptions take place, I think that Impressions of Virtue, Goodness, Generosity, Benevolence, supposing the absence of Prejudice, will be infinitely more agreeable to the unbiaſſed mind than Impressions of a contrary quality. In this sense I firmly believe that so far our kind Creator hath, by the very frame and constitution of our nature, shewn to man what is Good.

By which I do not mean any sensible impulse, or irresistible influence, but only such a dispensation of things, as in the operation and effect, shall appear nothing more than a good disposition guiding the conduct of man by motives of Discretion, Virtue and Religion.

From this view of the Human Constitution, it must manifestly appear, that at least there is not any natural repugnance against impressions of Benevolence and Philantho-

py : that the Social Affections of Compassion and Love for our fellow creatures are as much a part of our Nature, as those of a more selfish sort, and much more so than those which are mixed with malignity towards others. So that in all acts of Cruelty we seem to sin against Nature as much as against the Commands of God.

But Education hath it's Effect much sooner than is generally thought. It is seldom what it ought to be, and is sometimes so pernicious, that at length the whole order and original constitution of nature is perverted. And thus by degrees it comes to pass that we see men with deliberation of mind, approve what is abominably Evil; approve even of Cruelty, and the sight of Human Misery; with coolness, with apathy and fraudulent circumvention oppress, enslave and torture their fellow creatures. But this can never be till all the Social Affections are effaced, the work of God destroyed, and the Original Constitution of Human Nature overturned. Nor can any argument be taken from these instances to lead us to conclude, that even to these persons, thus dreadfully depraved, God did not originally shew what is Good.

Secondly,

Secondly, he hath assisted these Original Tendencies from our Constitution by gracious Communications of his Revealed Will. Of these there are various sorts and different degrees recorded in the Scripture, which at sundry times and in diverse manners were bestowed according to the circumstances of times, and the exigencies of mankind.

It is but very little that is recorded of the Providential directions given to our first parents, but it plainly appears that there was both a Permission, and a Prohibition, in order to shew Adam what was for his Good. “Of every Tree in the Garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Now although this be an obscure passage, and learned men have differed greatly in the senses they have put upon it, yet so far is very plain, that whatsoever the precise meaning of it may be, it undoubtedly proves a communication of the Divine Will to Adam for his Good. So also in the intercourse with Cain it is said, If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the door. This shews us plain,

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almost

almost as words can make it, that some information had been given him for his Good, and that his obedience or transgression would meet with due punishment or reward. Thus in the very infancy of the world did God condescend to shew man what is Good, in strengthening the original tendencies of Nature by Communications of the Divine Will. And throughout the succeeding ages, during the times of the Patriarchs, by the Institution of the Jewish Religion, and by the Inspiration of the Prophets, the same methods of Providence were pursued, and God never ceased to shew to Man what is Good. These communications were varied indeed according to the circumstances of the times, but in general they gradually became more and more clear, as they approached nearer to the dispensation of the Gospel, that full, that perfect, that final display of the Will of God for the Good of Man.

Let us now reason a little upon this state of things. God is our Creator, our Father. It is agreeable to Truth, and the Fitness of things, as it is expressed, that a Father should shew an indulgent care of his children; that he should instruct their ignorance,

rance, that he should bestow on them the means of improvement, that he should lead them to their proper Good. This it appears that God hath done for his children, both from the frame of their Constitution, and by direct as well as intermediate communications with them. What then is the result of all this care and tenderness? Is it bestowed upon us without expectation of any return on our part? doth not a sense of gratitude and duty inform us that this cannot be? There is then some requisition from us. God hath shewn thee, O man, what is Good, and in return, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Justice, Mercy, and Humility are then the great Requisites, and the Outlines of our Duty.

That Justice from Man to Man is an indispensable obligation needs not any formal proof, because it is self-evident, that if men were permitted, according to their supposed necessities, or their vicious inclinations, to be unjust towards each other, nothing but universal discord, confusion, and misery must be the immediate consequence. That this is an unquestionable Truth, ap-

appears too plainly from the miserable condition of those unhappy men oppressed with the Yoke of Slavery, in whose severe fate, inattention to the maxims of common justice produces universally the most insupportable state of human wretchedness. But farther, he who is unjust is a Thief and a Robber, because, so far as his injustice extends, he takes by fraud or violence that which belongs to another, and deprives him of his proper right. Now Society consists in the union of it's members and in every one's enjoying peaceably what is his own. But Injustice breaks this Union, and all peaceable enjoyments of Personal Property, and tends to the dissolution of Human Society. Justice therefore is enjoined us, in the first place as an absolute and indispensable duty, because men were formed to live in Society, and because Society cannot subsist but by a reciprocal observation of Justice.

There is not, it may be observed, any virtue in Justice, nor the least shadow of reward due to the practise of it: every one has a strict and absolute right to it from every other person. And we might as well pretend to merit for not putting out the
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eyes of our neighbour, or not depriving him of his life, as to any virtue in refraining from Injustice towards him. By the practice of Justice we only avoid being criminal. We are not in any degree profitable servants, we shall have barely done what it was our strict duty to do. When therefore we hear such mighty praises on the character of the Honest man, the word Honesty must be taken in some extended signification, because every one is under an indispensable obligation to Honesty and Justice. Such praises then are in truth little better than censure on the practice of the world, if these commendations are given to the meer refraining from a Crime.

But our duty doth not rest here. We are in the next place to love Mercy. There is a peculiar energy in this form of expression. We are to do Justly, but we are to love Mercy. Let us then examine our real situation with respect to this most amiable of all human virtues. And, first, as it may be connected with Justice in the redress of Injuries, or the Punishment of Offences.

In the administration of Justice for the redress of Injuries we ought, no doubt, to see that compensation be made to the injured,

jured, but this should always be done without passion, without malevolence, without any unnecessary rigour. And so far every one has a right that Mercy should be mixed with Justice in the redress of Injuries.

In the administration of Justice for the Punishment of Offences, Mercy seems to have a stronger call upon us than in the redress of Injuries. In many things we all offend; we should therefore have a fellow-feeling for Offenders, and a consciousness of human weakness should teach us this compassion as far as is consistent with public welfare. Doubtless there are some crimes of a nature so atrocious as not to leave room for Mercy—where punishment must be for Example and for Terror: but in general, it is to be wished that our Penal Laws were more equitably proportionate to offences, and more than they are at present found, softened by Mercy: more gentle in the Penal Sentence, and in Execution more determined.

But there is yet a far more extensive field open to us for the exertion of Mercy, than the redress of Injuries, or the Punishment of Offences. Every creature that God hath made, and endued with life and sensibility,

is entitled to our Mercy. The most perfect of human beings hath some imperfections which may claim our pity ; nor is the humble worm which we tread under foot beneath our tender regard. And yet, if we take a dispassionate view of our general conduct, with what horror must we contemplate our deviation from this godlike direction to Love Mercy. Even the procurement of our food, nay our very amusements are too often founded in cruelty. What shall we say to the general treatment of those Animals, which, though for our benefit placed by Providence in a state of subordination to ourselves, are yet endued with noble powers and faculties both of Body and Mind? who possess in high degree the sense of Pain and Pleasure—who are conscious, as we ourselves can be, of kind, and of cruel usage—who give evident proofs of Gratitude and Affection. It should be for ever kept in mind by us, That the righteous man is merciful to his Beast—but in this respect we have neither righteousness nor mercy. Yet they have all the same common father with ourselves, the same God created them. “ Who gave the horse his strength, and cloathed his neck with thunder? who made

made the glory of his nostrils terrible? who taught him to paw in the valley, to mock at fear, and not to turn back from the sword?" and was he formed by an Almighty hand with these distinctions, and was it given him to possess these superior qualities, and yet be doomed to the cruel fate which every where attends him? But this is a crime which must hereafter be accounted for—God, in his benediction to Noah, hath declared, that for the blood, that is, for the cruel treatment of every inferior Animal he will require an account, "at the hand of every beast will I require it."

Happy for us would it be did our Cruelty stop here; happy, was it not extended to such a degree, and perpetrated with such horrid circumstances of savage ferocity, as seem to preclude all possibility of pardon. When thousands and ten times tens of thousands of Innocent Men, through vile and mercenary motives are annually doomed to Slaughter, nay, to a state far worse than than Slaughter, by premeditated contrivance, and infernal deliberation of mind. I have not in view the ravages of war; these are innocent pastimes compared with the scenes of Cruelty to which I allude. I mean

mean our established, and to our eternal shame be it said, our Legal Traffick in Human Blood. In this view the thought is beyond measure horrible: for while the Legislature gives formal Sanction to this Enormity, they make themselves partakers, and so involve the Nation in the dreadful guilt of the Individuals immediately concerned in these deeds of Oppression, Cruelty, Murther.

We read of a Pharaoh, of a Nero, of sanguinary tyrants in the East: we read of Kings nearer home, and nearer our own times whose characteristic appellations were the *Cruel*, the *Bloody*: yet we no where read of any Character that for total want of Humanity stands equal to the British Merchant in Men. In the former instances the crimes indeed were great, but they were the crimes of Individuals, giving an uncontrouled dominion to their vicious passions: in the latter, the Evil is a Systematic Institution of hardness of heart, and unexampled barbarity. A species of merchandise it is, founded in principles that stand in direct opposition and in open defiance to the peculiar and distinguishing commands of our Saviour; and this too in the face of
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the world, patronized by the Legislature of a Nation, professing itself Christian. Astonishing Contradiction! I do not mean to insinuate, that the Christian Institution in express terms prohibits Slavery; it supposes such a Practice to have subsisted; yet the directions given to persons in a state of Servitude are not to be considered as an approbation of that practice, but merely from it's spirit of accommodation, and to preserve peace both in families and states, as a rule of obedient conduct to those who were in that unhappy situation. For the Spirit of Christianity abhors the very idea; teaches us that with God there is no such respect of Persons, and that in his sight the poor slave, who patiently suffers, is of greater merit than the Tyrant who inflicts his sufferings.

An Enormity this of such magnitude, that with the circumstances preceding the very act, the act itself, and the certain known consequences attending it, the Annals of the whole world cannot produce it's equal in perfidy, injustice, and cruelty: being radically, absolutely, and essentially Evil, loaded with all possible malignity, and totally destitute of any Real Good. It

is therefore not justifiable by the Sanction of any Human Institution. For not even Political Necessity can be justly pleaded for it, which, some men seem to think, can change the very Essence of Actions.

A respectable writer upon Morals, in the distinction between Things and Persons, observes, that Man being a Person cannot make himself a Thing, so as to become the Property of another Man. This observation may be corroborated by reflecting, that every Man immediately upon his birth, and throughout the whole course of his life, is already a Property belonging to a superior Lord, and therefore cannot make himself the Property of an inferior. He is for ever the Property of God. "It is God who hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are HIS people, and the Sheep of HIS pasture." Nor can we, without Guilt, alienate this Property of God, or transfer it from him to Man. We have not any authority so to do, for we belong to God. Hence we cannot dispose of our own Life or commit Suicide without being Criminal. On the same reasoning that We ourselves, and all that is generally called Our Own, belongs strictly to God, appears the propriety

priety of a future day of Responsibility, when for all our Actions done in the Body, and for the Use or Abuse of all our Talents and Faculties we must render an Account to God. All which Talents and Faculties are therefore called by our Saviour, That which is *Another's*^a, as being not independently our Own Property, but only of that sort of Possession which is in the Nature of a Trust, and over which Another, that is, God, hath the Superior and Sovereign claim. No man, therefore, can assign absolutely over to another Himself, and all his Powers and Faculties, which is only a Possession of Trust from God without robbing God of his Right. But every man who makes himself a Slave is guilty of this Robbery. And if no one has a right to do this himself, undoubtedly no other can do it for him. This seems to imply that Slavery is originally, and fundamentally indefensible, being essentially Evil: but our Mode of carrying on this business, the point I have particularly in view, is the deliberate perpetration of a Crime against God under all the most horrid circumstances of cruel

^a Luke xvi. 12. το αλλοτριον.

aggravation : it is therefore a transgression of the command, To Love Mercy.

Some idle pleas have been made for it from long custom, and the practice of the world : but this way we might justify every vice of man. Some excuse has been offered from a pretended inferiority in the constitution of these unfortunate men : that they are untractable, and must be ruled with a rod of Iron. This is what every Tyrant can say in defence of his Tyranny. And were in true in this instance, is it to be wondered at, or is it to be condemned, if men are untractable, who, by fraud and violence, have not only been deprived of every endearment of Life, but are continually torn by the stings and lashes of their unfeeling tormentors. It has also been pretended that they are of lower intellectual abilities than the rest of mankind. Suppose it were so, does this give us a right to enslave and torment them? But this is absolutely false : God made of one blood all the sons of men : and many instances have appeared to prove, that with respect to Mental Powers, they want only equal information to equal the inhabitants of the more enlightened

ened Nations of the Earth^b. In respect of Gratitude, inviolable Affection, and every amiable quality of mind, where they have been humanely treated, they stand in an unrivaled Superiority. Some have attempted, in a general way, to justify Slavery from Captivity, from Insolvency, on account of Crimes, or from the Despotism in the State, but whatsoever weight these reasons may have in cases where they can be admitted, yet here they lose all their force, and are totally inapplicable to this vile traffick of the British Man-Merchant. For with respect to this nefarious commerce they are not founded in truth, and if they were true they are not defensible^c. But all
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^b See the Letters of Ignatius Sancho, and the Poems by Phyllis.

^c Amongst various equally unjust and cruel methods of supplying our Ships with Slaves, the Prince of the Country, if he is not provided with sufficient numbers, will sometimes surround a village full of innocent and peaceable inhabitants with his troops: and setting fire to the place, the unfortunate creatures thus circumvented, must either perish in the flames, or fall into his hands. The latter are sold to our Men-Merchants, who sell those they do not destroy in the voyage to the Planters: who in their cruelty are thus far kind, that it is exerted to such degree as to be intolerable by the human frame, and therefore but few of these unfortunate creatures live many years. In these instances, neither Captivity, properly speaking, nor Insolvency, nor Crimes can
possibly

the shallow arguments that have been produced from these and similar Topics, as Palliations of Injustice and Justifications of Cruelty, are founded in falsehood and deception; and it appears, on fair examination, that this commerce militates against worldly profit as much as against common Humanity. So that the purchasers of Men from the Men-stealers, seem to be under a judicial infatuation, while they clearly act against their own temporal, as well as their eternal interest in the unparalleled barbarities which they daily, and hourly, and every moment inflict upon their poor tortured fellow creatures; since even their mercenary views would be better answered if they could pay the least attention to the calls, the duties of Humanity. For the intolerable hardships to which these unhappy men are generally subjected, drive many to

possibly be urged as a Justification of the Practice. Despotism indeed is seen in it's true Colours, and whoever has the effrontery to make use of such a plea, may be seized in some similar way, and meet with similar treatment. For it is a precept both in heathen and in Christian Ethics, that as he would do to others he should be done unto himself.

It is calculated that by these inhuman practices a hundred thousand people are annually murdered; and that since the commencement of the Traffick, nine millions of human creatures have been destroyed. *Ninety hundred thousand.*

See the Summary View.

to Suicide from despair, and many perish from the consequences of a very justifiable resistance to the severities of their unfeeling task masters. While on the contrary, in the few instances where they are well treated, they are found not to decrease, but to multiply^d, to retain their vigour, and perform their appointed labours with resignation to their hard Fate. From such Absurdity of Conduct in their hard-hearted tyrants, one might imagine that some malignant Demon first infatuates them and then destroys^e.

That the Legislature of a Nation illuminated to a high degree by Science, human and divine, proud of Liberty Civil, Political and Religious, well acquainted with the Rights of Humanity, and pretending to the strict observance, not less than the knowledge of them, boasting every where of it's Charity and Benevolence, and encouraging Institutions for the relief of Human Misery, that this Legislature should yet give protection

^d Seven plantations have wanted no supplies for some years. On these plantations the Negroes were treated with humanity. On one of them, where the treatment was superior to that of the rest, the numbers increased so much that the plantation was overstocked.

Summary View of the Slave Trade, p. 14.

^e Quos vult perdere dementat prius.

protection to such wicked men in such wicked practices, is indeed an event which must excite our astonishment, for which we must pour forth the deepest lamentation; of which we cannot think without horror, cannot speak but with indignation; and in this instance certainly we may be angry, and sin not, even though the sun should go down upon wrath. But shall not God visit for such things, and shall not his soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? Possibly our Punishment, if we repent not of these Evil doings, may not be far off: possibly a state of worldly prosperity may be the prelude to it: for when Individuals or Nations are become completely wicked,

—they are raised aloft—

To make their fall more dreadful—^f

Let us, however, hope that it is not yet too late to return to God. We are assured that when the Wicked turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right, he shall save his Soul alive. We have formerly had Laws in this Country concerning Commutation for Murther, Laws concerning Witch-

^f—tolluntur in altum—
Ut lapsu graviore ruant—

Claud.

Witchcraft, Laws condemning to a cruel death for a difference in religious opinion. These Laws for their Injustice have been repealed. We have now Laws subsisting concerning the Traffick in Human Blood*. These Laws are equally unjust, and may they soon have an equal fate, and may the British Legislature in this instance, be entitled to honour for a due attention to the common rights of Humanity, the demands of Justice, the cries of Mercy.

But it has been urged, that by virtue of these Laws, the public faith is pledged to these dealers in men for protection in the present mode of carrying on their business. So much the worse: for neither the Public protecting, nor the Individuals protected have any right to pledge, or expect Faith for the Commission of Moral Evil; *for God*
hath

* 5 Geo. 3. And be it farther enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall not be lawful for any of the *Officers* or *Servants* employed by the Committee of the said Company on the Coast of Africa, to *export Negroes* from Africa upon *their own* Account—and if any such officer or servant shall be found, &c. he shall be dismissed, &c.

This clause is written with a pen dipped in the heart's blood of these devoted Victims, thus delivered by the Legislature of Britain to be EXPORTED as Goods of common merchandise by this African Committee: for whose greater Gain their servants are prohibited from interference in this murderous injustice. This Bloody Statute is the Legislative Act of British Christians!

batb not given any man Licence to Sin. Eccl.
xv. 20.

Farther, in defence of the Purchasers of Men from the Men-stealers, it has also been said, That we must not do Evil that Good may come; and therefore we must not do an injury to these persons in order either to set their Slaves at Liberty, or prevent a future purchase. Let us join issue upon this argument. The pretended injury in this case is at the worst, merely an inconvenience which may soon and easily be remedied: it has not any thing in it of the nature of Moral Evil, and will be in the highest degree productive of Moral Good. Whatsoever it may be, it arises originally from circumstances essentially and morally Evil: therefore even to occasion this inconvenience, is not doing, but removing Evil that Good may come. A skilful Surgeon frequently occasions an inconvenience to produce a greater Good: he must go to the bottom of the wound to promote a permanent cure. But this argument may be retorted. We must not do Evil, it is said, that Good may come. Certainly therefore we must not be guilty of Perfidy, Cruelty, and Murther, the highest instances of moral Evil, merely that the Planter may with the greater ease

cultivate his Plantation. And if this be true, which cannot be denied, there never would be any slaves to be tortured, or set at Liberty.

But it is farther said, that you cannot devise any mode of proceeding preferable to the present, since it is the real Interest of the Planter to see that his slaves are treated with gentleness and humanity. Interest is doubtless a powerful motive: but alas! do we not every day see many instances in which men deliberately act in direct contradiction to their true interest? It is the true interest of every one to be temperate, virtuous, prudent. Are there then none who are intemperate, vicious, imprudent? How many are there born to affluence and independance, who never are at rest till they have made themselves wretched, despicable dependants! Their real interest has no weight with them when a scandalous passion is to be gratified, neither has it with the Dealer in Men.

Far

† On one plantation in Barbadoes, by the cruelty of the Planter, in two years the number of his slaves was reduced from 170 to 95: and at his death it was found that his inhuman severity had not encreased his Fortune. While on another plantation on the same island, though in a less favourable situation, by the humane and gentle treatment of the Master, who was as a father to his Negroes, they multiplied to a great degree. He purchased a second estate, and at his death, with the highest character for his tenderness and humanity, he had more than doubled his original fortune.

Far be it from me to wish the least detriment to these persons: I most devoutly wish their Reformation, and their true happiness; and mean only to insinuate that the argument from wordly interest hath not any conclusive weight as operating effectually upon the Planter's mind; or if it had, that the end proposed would be better answered by the employment of Persons in a state of Civil Liberty.

There are doubtless different ways of considering this subject, as Politicians, and as Christians. The Politician considers things of this nature merely as subjects of Political Casuistry without any regard to Moral Rectitude: the Christian looks to a more important end, which is not attainable but by a conduct that is Holy, Just, and Good. The Evils which the Politician fears or pretends to fear, are Imaginary: the Evils which the Christian actually sees, are Real, are Horrible; are of a Maglignity for which there cannot be any compensation by any worldly advantage whatsoever.

Let us then treat this matter as true and tenderhearted Christians. Let us look with an eye of Pity upon those who are fast bound in misery and iron: let us consider those who are thus bound as being bound with them:

let us break their bonds afunder, and cast away their cords from us: let us give light and liberty to those who sit in darkness, and the shadow of Death, and from a state of misery and torture, let us guide their feet into the Paths of Peace.

Why the Almighty hath not shewn the lighting down of his arm, and instantaneously blasted the offenders by some severe stroke of his indignation.—why these enormities have hitherto been permitted, we cannot presume to say: we must not too curiously pry into the secret dispensations of Providence—these are amongst the things that require us to walk humbly with our God.

In truth, there are mysterious things in all the works and all the ways of God, that shew the propriety of the concluding precept in the Text. But as we are certain that his dispensations are all derived from infinite Goodness and Mercy, our duty is Resignation to his Will, and a resolution to walk Humbly with our God, till that time shall come when this mysterious veil shall be drawn aside, and every thing be made known unto us as clearly as we ourselves are known to him who made us.

In this resigned and humble state of mind,
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we may without murmuring contemplate those circumstances which else must hurt every one endued with sensibility and benevolence, while they exhibit the great Theatre of Nature, whether in the Air, or on the Earth, or in the Waters under the Earth, as a Scene of Violence and Depredation. Far different this from that promised state of things, when the Earth should be full of the Mercy of the Lord, and peace and happiness established throughout his holy Mountain.

In this state of mind, we may with less discomposure contemplate even those horrible deeds already faintly sketched, and rest in hope that God in his good time will soften the flinty hearts of our Men-stealers, and Men-purchasers, and touch them with a spark of Mercy.

In this state of mind, we may with resignation contemplate that apparently unequal distribution of things in the worldly prosperity of wicked men, and in the depression and distress of those who are of modest Merit and unassuming Virtue.

In this state of mind, we may with cheerful submission contemplate our own origin from the Dust of the Earth, and our approaching

proaching resolution into the same state of Original Insensibility, under the Firm belief and expectation, that God in his appointed season, will a second time bestow upon us not only Sensibility, but Immortality. A revolution this in the circumstances of Man's Existence which utterly confounds all Human Philosophy that doth not admit the Truth, and the Mediatorial Efficacy of the Christian Dispensation, by which alone we gain a rational and authoritative assurance of *The Resurrection and the Life*.

In this state of mind, we may without repining, contemplate the Origin and Progress of those Corruptions, which by substituting the traditions of men in place of the Commands of God, have in several instances especially under the Papal Hierarchy made the word of God of none effect: under the specious term of Orthodoxy defacing the genuine simplicity of the Gospel, and by the introduction and intermixture of Opinions and Doctrines, from the Schools of Heathen Philosophy, laying foundation for the peculiar Errors of Popery. With equal resignation also, on the contrary, we may contemplate those parts of the Divine Dispensations that still remain really mysterious,
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and which, from imperfect views, have sometimes led hasty reasoners into Infidelity. While on one hand, seeing some things admitted into Systems of Christianity that appear to them evidently false, they precipitately conclude that nothing there is true; or on the other, presuming that the Human Understanding is commensurate to every object of it's investigation, they reject every thing that to them has the least appearance of Mystery. But these are extremes that are very blameable. For though additions or corruptions may obscure, they do not annihilate Truth; and though many things manifestly appear, and are easily known, yet there are still many things concealed, which in our present state of imperfect and confined faculties, we shall never know, and which for the present are proper objects of our Faith, and proper proofs of our Humility. For now we see but through a glass darkly, but the time will soon come when we shall see face to face.

When that awful period shall arrive, our Humility shall receive it's reward, and these mysterious parts of the Divine Dispensations be made clear and manifest to us as the Sun when he goeth forth in his might.

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In the mean time let us, with absolute resignation of Soul, and with the deepest gratitude receive what God hath hitherto shewn us for our Good; let us with unre-mitted perseverance continue To do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.



LONDON, 15th Jan. 1788.

At a Committee of the Society, instituted for the Purpose of effecting the ABOLITION of the SLAVE TRADE.

RESOLVED, That the following Report be circulated for the general Information of the Society.

THIS Committee would gladly have availed themselves of the sentiments and instructions of a General Meeting of the Society, in prosecuting the important objects of their appointment, but the remote situation of most of the subscribers, creates a difficulty which cannot easily be obviated. The Committee, however, beg leave to assure them, that due attention will be paid to such communications as they may be favoured with from individual members, and which it seems impracticable to obtain from the collective body.

The information and arguments on this subject, contained in various publications, have fully evinced the injustice and inhumanity of the Slave Trade. The Committee have expended a considerable sum in printing and dispersing such tracts; but as they are fully persuaded, that no further arguments are necessary on that head, they have more particularly directed their attention to the plea of political necessity, which is frequently urged to justify, or at least to palliate, this traffick. For though it can by no means be admitted, that the greatest commercial advantages ought to preponderate, when opposed to the plainest dictates of religion and morality, yet the Committee are not insensible of the natural influence which interest has in biasing the judgements of
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men, and of how much importance it is to convince the publick, that the commerce of this kingdom, and even the interest of the Slave-Holders themselves, will be advanced by the success of our endeavours.

With this view the Committee have been, and still are, engaged, at no inconsiderable expence, in promoting inquiries into the nature and conduct of the Slave Trade. These inquiries have not only produced fresh instances of the cruelties perpetrated on the wretched natives of Africa; but have established a fact, hitherto but little known, namely, the destruction of our seamen; for it appears that the lives of a very considerable proportion of those engaged in this trade, are annually sacrificed to the nature of the service, and the extreme severity of their treatment. To the abilities and unremitting assiduity of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Clarkson, in these researches, the Society are much indebted.

It must be acknowledged, that the amount of British manufactures exported to the coasts of Africa, for the purposes of this commerce, is considerable; but there is room to apprehend, that the demand for these would be much greater, if, in the place of it, was substituted an amicable intercourse, which, instead of spreading distress and devastation amongst the unoffending inhabitants, would introduce the blessings of peace and civilization. The Committee find, that several vessels have, for some time, been solely employed in the importation of many valuable productions of that country, of essential advantage to the manufactures of this: and they are in possession of sundry specimens of its produce, which confirm their belief, that the confidence of the natives being once established, a trade may be opened with them, which, without interfering with the principal staple commodities of our West-India Colonies, would speedily become of great national importance.

The Committee have several well authenticated accounts of estates in the West-Indies, on which the number of negroes has been not only supported, but increased, without any foreign supply for many years: a circumstance which affords the strongest proof that the nature of the case will admit, that a proper attention to the principles

ciples of humanity in their treatment would preclude the necessity of any further supplies from the coasts of Africa.

The Committee feel it their duty to diffuse the information they have obtained as generally as possible, and more particularly to avail themselves of every opportunity (in which they earnestly request the assistance of every individual) of impressing on the minds of our legislators, the necessity of entering into a serious investigation of the subject; and they have great satisfaction in reporting that many very respectable Members of both Houses of Parliament have assured them of their disposition to promote our design.

The applications of the Committee have generally met with a cordial reception, and indeed persons of respectable situation in many parts of the kingdom have afforded unsolicited support. Several men of learning have espoused the cause in various publications. The Clergy of the established Church, and the Ministers amongst the Dissenters, there is good reason to believe are in general sincere friends to the undertaking. Members of both Universities have expressed themselves in terms of approbation of the plan; and, together with these, the spirited exertions of Manchester, Birmingham, and other principal Manufacturing Towns, afford ground to hope that a species of oppression, so disgraceful to the nation, will at length be abolished by general consent. And they trust, that whatever difficulties may attend their progress, by a steady perseverance the Society will eventually be instrumental to the success of a cause, in which are involved the honour of this country, and the happiness of millions of our fellow-creatures.

During the attention of the Committee to the business, undoubted accounts have been received from North America, of the good conduct and capacity of many of the negroes resident there, with specimens of their improvement in useful learning, at a school established in Philadelphia for their education, which satisfactorily prove the absurdity of the notion, that their understandings are not equally susceptible of cultivation with those of white people.

The Committee have likewise received information
from

from France, that there is a probability of a Society being established there on the same principles as our own.

The present amount of Subscriptions received is £. 1367. 8s. 2d.; and of our Payments already made, £. 514. 17s. 10d. Though it is foreseen that the future expences in this business will be considerable, it is impossible to ascertain the amount; but the liberal contributions now reported, leave no room to doubt that such further assistance will be cheerfully given as will be requisite to complete the purposes of the institution. The Committee trust it is unnecessary to add, that to these purposes only they shall be faithfully applied.

Signed, by order of the Committee,

GRANVILLE SHARP, Chairman.

